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NEWS RELEASE

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FIVE INDICTED IN WELLS FARGO CHECK CASHING SCHEME

SACRAMENTO -- United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that a federal grand jury returned an eight count indictment charging JASMINE CHANEL CARMICHAEL, 21, JASMINE NICOLE BUTTS, 23, EBONY CROMWELL, age unknown, DARCELL EPPS, 20, and TIFFANY CHARANADA PIPPINS, 20, with Conspiracy to Commit Bank Fraud, Bank Fraud, and Aggravated Identity Theft.

This case is the product of an extensive joint investigation by the Placer County Sheriff's Office and the United States Secret Service.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Kyle Reardon, who is prosecuting the case, the indictment alleges that from May 29, 2007, through August 8, 2007, the defendants engaged in a coordinated scheme to steal account information from Wells Fargo customers. Using that information, the coconspirators called Wells Fargo Customer Service and changed the contact information on those accounts to a phone number controlled by one of the conspirators. The co-conspirators would then prepare checks with the stolen information for amounts ranging from \$2,000 to \$7,500. Ms. BUTTS would drive Ms. CARMICHAEL, Ms. PIPPINS, Ms. CROMWELL, or Mr. EPPS to various Wells Fargo branches in Roseville and Rocklin, as well as the Bay Area and Reno, Nevada, and give them forged checks to be cashed. Ms. BUTTS and Ms. CROMWELL also traveled to Las Vegas, Nevada to cash

forged checks. When presented with the checks, Wells Fargo called the account holder to confirm its validity. A co-conspirator would receive the call and authorize payment. The proceeds of the fraudulently cashed check would be shared among all parties.

The maximum statutory penalty for a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1344, Bank Fraud, is 30 years confinement, a \$1,000,000 fine, or both confinement and a fine, and five years of supervised release. In addition, the Aggravated Identity Theft, 18 U.S.C. § 1028A, is punishable by a mandatory two year sentence, consecutive to any other sentence that might be given, as well as a \$250,000 fine, or both a fine and sentence, and a one year term of supervised release. However, the actual sentence will be dictated by the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of factors, and will be imposed at the discretion of the court.

The charges are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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